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2. Comment on split in Leftist opposition party in Israel:

[REDACTED] Two Israeli Parliament members have broken with their party, the leftist MAPAM, and have decided to form an independent group. The two members are opposed to the decided pro-Communist slant taken by the left wing of MAPAM, which has often followed the Communist line and is the strongest opposition to Prime Minister Ben Gurion's coalition government. The party is losing two of its 15 deputies in the 120-man Parliament by this action; moreover, some of the remaining 13 are opposed to the party's often-displayed Communist alignment. The stability of the present government is enhanced by this formal break within MAPAM, which may foreshadow more splintering.

3. France proffers admittedly unacceptable program to Tunisia:

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[REDACTED] The Chief of the Protectorates Division in the French Foreign Office told the American Ambassador that Resident General Jean de Hautecloque is returning to Tunis with instructions to see the Bey privately and to promise "vague reforms" in exchange for the dismissal of the Bey's Prime Minister.

If Hautecloque fails in this mission, as the Foreign Office expects, he will have to wait until the French Government decides upon specific reforms to offer the Bey. Since order has been fairly well restored, there is now no sense of urgency.

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EASTERN EUROPE

4. Anti-religious attacks increase in Yugoslavia:

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The Tito regime has forbidden religious instruction in the schools of Slovenia and Croatia, both predominantly Catholic regions, and has ordered the separation of all theological faculties from their respective universities in the various republics. Moreover, the provincial press and local Communist Party organizations in Slovenia have increased their attacks against the clergy, and a series of newspaper articles along Marxist lines have predicted the demise of religion in Yugoslavia.

American officials believe that these developments suggest a high level decision to revive the religious issue as part of a concerted effort to restore party purity and reactivate the party's revolutionary functions, in order to reassure Yugoslav Communists that the building of socialism remains the principal objective of the regime.

Comment: The notable increase in anti-Catholic activity is not only an attempt to regenerate party spirit but is also probably calculated to discredit the widespread belief in Yugoslavia that the release of Archbishop Stepinac represents a concession to Yugoslav Catholics and the West.

WESTERN EUROPE

5. East Germans to close canal lock on Berlin route to West:

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East German officials have announced the closing for repairs of the Grosswusterwitz lock of the Plauer Canal, part of the Mittelland Canal system linking West Berlin and West Germany, from 22 February to 6 March, according to a report from American officials in Berlin. At first this will apparently not affect the Mittelland Canal traffic, already hampered by ice conditions.

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Later, however, if the closing is prolonged beyond 6 March, it may necessitate re-routing canal traffic between Berlin and the West by a longer and inferior route, thus lengthening the barge trip by approximately two days.

Comment: The closing of the Rothensee lock in the Mittelland system, however, comprised one of the most effective Communist harassing measures against West Berlin during 1951. Originally announced for six weeks, these "repairs" were dragged out for almost eleven months.

6. Austrian officials anticipate stronger Soviet pressure:

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Chancellor Figl and Vice-Chancellor Schaerf have informed the American Embassy in Vienna that the Soviet Headquarters may have received new directives to "bolster" the Soviet Union's economic and political position in Austria. Special attention, they believe, is to be devoted to economic penetration, with probable exploitation of the unemployment problem to be expected.

General Sviridov, the Soviet High Commissioner, had warned Figl and Schaerf that any action against Soviet retail establishments in Austria would be considered an action against the Soviet Union, and intimated that "workers" might demonstrate before the Federal Chancellory in support of these enterprises. The American Embassy associates this new policy with the recent shake-up in high-ranking personnel of the Soviet Headquarters.

Comment: Since the failure of the scheduled meeting of the treaty deputies, the Austrians have been increasingly bold in denouncing Soviet policy on the treaty and Soviet economic exploitation. The Soviet authorities have reacted with violent propaganda attacks on the Austrian and American Governments and their alleged plans for partitioning and remilitarizing Austria.